

REMARKS

Pursuant to the present amendment, claims 13 and 19 have been amended, claim 18 has been canceled and new claims 22-25 have been added. Thus, claims 13-17 and 19-25 are pending in the present application. No new matter has been introduced by way of the present amendment. Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the amendments and arguments set forth herein.

Pursuant to the present amendment, claims 1-12 have been canceled as they are directed to a non-elected invention that was the subject of a previous restriction requirement. Applicants specifically reserve the right to pursue the subject matter defined by the canceled claims in a later filed application should they so desire.

In the Office Action, claims 14-15 and 18-21 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Office Action, p. 3. Pursuant to the present amendment, new independent claims 22 and 24 have been added to present dependent claims 14 and 20, respectively, in independent form. Thus, it is believed that new claims 22-25 are allowable.

In the Office Action, claims 13, 16 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as allegedly being anticipated by Tao (U.S. Patent No. 6,023,100). The Examiner's rejections are moot in view of the amendments made herein. It should be understood that in making the amendments set forth herein, Applicants do not acquiesce in the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejections. Applicants specifically reserve the right to pursue claims of the scope set forth in the rejected claims in a later filed application should they desire to do so. Moreover, since the amendments set forth herein merely re-present allowable dependent claims in

independent form, it is believed that there are no issues of prosecution history estoppel with respect to these claims.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are in condition for immediate allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at (713) 934-4055 with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAMS, MORGAN & AMERSON
CUSTOMER NO. 23720

Date: July 14, 2006

/J. Mike Amerson/

J. Mike Amerson
Reg. No. 35,426
10333 Richmond, Suite 1100
Houston, Texas 77042
(713) 934-4055
(713) 934-7011 (facsimile)

ATTORNEY FOR APPLICANTS